

THE AUSCP & RACISM

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In 2015 the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests formally took a stand aligning ourselves with the position of our bishops regarding racism among us and in our culture: we need to eradicate it. Sometimes we are guilty of not seeing the roots of racism in ourselves. We project it outward, attaching it to others.

Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN and Anne-Louise Nadeau, SNDdeN recently published an essay regarding the work of eradicating racism from our personal and communal lives. They wrote about religious and their communities, but the points they make apply to AUSCP priests and friends. As an Association we too need to take a look. The title of their essay is *We Cannot Heal That Which We Cannot Name* (LCWR Occasional Papers, Summer 2018).

The authors propose that we need “to look at how the sin of racism is not only woven into the fabric of our US reality, but into the very life of our congregations” – for AUSCP our Association, for many of us, our presbyterates. That requires truth-telling among ourselves, they write, and they encourage readers to look, see, and tell by such prompts as ...

- What’s our history? Are we affirming of black, Latino, and Native candidates and those ordained?
- What might our archives reveal, if examined, about how persons of color interested in becoming priests were handled by our dioceses or religious communities?
- In our retreats, convocations, and assemblies, have we asked priests of color to share their experience with us? Did we listen? Did we rebut and dismiss or did we learn? Did we undergo any conversion? Did that lead us to do anything?
- Whom do we hire to do the work that needs to be done on our properties, vehicles, etc.?
- Is there any heritage of slaves in our deep history?
- Do we welcome the stranger, the “other,” into our fraternity?
- Have we internalized any element of racial superiority, defined as “a complex, multi-generational process that teaches which people to believe, accept and live out superior definitions of themselves and of their role in society.” (www.crossroadsantiracism.org)
- Have we confessed negative attitudes and behaviors toward racially different persons or groups?
- Do we who are white comment on everything that a person of color says? Do we dismiss the other’s truth?

The sisters conclude their essay by evoking the figure of Blind Bartimaeus (Mk 10:36). When asked by Jesus what he wanted, he said “I want to see.” Do we? Are we willing to face the reality of ugly racism in our society and any hold that has on us? Are we reluctant to address it because we consider it to be “out there” rather than “in here?”

We must, they write, embrace our feelings and work through them in order to get to the other side, to truth.

May the stance of our Association help us do that.